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CIA role in Chile exposed

By RUTH NEEDLEMAN

The Central Intelligence Agency has officially admitted what many have known for a long time: it spent millions of dollars over the past 10 years to block and then to overthrow the presidency of Salvador Allende in Chile.

Some but by no means all of the details of the CIA's anti-Allende plotting came to light last week. A few days before the first anniversary of the Sept. 11, 1973 coup, Rep. Michael Harrington (D-Conn.), released a summary of top secret testimony given by CIA director William Colby to a House subcommittee last April.

Among Colby's admissions was that the CIA had allocated over \$8 million between 1970 and 1973 to "destabilize" Allende's Popular Unity government. An additional \$3 million was spent for reactionary causes in the Chilean election of 1964.

Colby's testimony also points to Henry Kissinger as the top policymaker responsible for the CIA's Chilean missions. All decisions regarding funding for clandestine operations in Chile, Colby indicated, were discussed and approved by the secret "40 Committee."

Kissinger headed this body from 1969 in his role as President Nixon's national security advisor. According to high-level government sources quoted by the New York Times and the Washington Post, Kissinger himself led a "hard line" faction demanding swift and forceful action to overthrow the Allende government.

"I don't see why," Kissinger reportedly told the group, "we need to stand by and watch a country go communist due to the irresponsibility of its own people." This quote, said the Sept. 11 New York Times, was originally included in the controversial book, "The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence," but was censored under pressure of the intelligence agency.

State Department officials, in commenting on the revelations, clung to their position that there was no U.S. intervention. This ludicrous pose is an effort to cover for the Secretary of State. Kissinger told reporters shortly after the coup that "the CIA had nothing to do with the coup, to the best of my knowledge and belief—and I only put in that qualification in case some madman appears down there who without instructions talked to somebody." The release of Colby's testimony shows this statement up as a barefaced lie.

NOTHING NEW HERE

Colby's testimony claimed Chile was a "test case" for CIA operations abroad, a trial run for the technique of making huge cash payments to bring down a government antagonistic to U.S. interests. While the admission that large sums were handed over to individuals, political parties, paramilitary groups, media and other institutions are to be believed, the assertion that there is something unique in all this is beyond credibility.

The CIA's infusion of massive amounts of dollars to prop up right-wing forces and propel them to overthrow nationalist and popular governments is nothing new. In Latin America alone, this has been standard policy. Over the past 20 years the U.S. has been caught red-handed intervening in Guatemala, Guyana, Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Bolivia, Cuba, Uruguay and Chile—with Argentina on the upcoming agenda.

Colby's testimony also highlights the powerlessness of the State Department bureaucracy and of the Congress to affect CIA operations. Congress as a whole was never informed of the "40 Committee" deliberations. Among the clandestine CIA operations

00769

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to which Colby admitted are these:

—Passing \$500,000 in 1969 and another \$500,000 in 1970 under the table to right-wing candidates in the Chilean elections.

—Spending \$350,000 in outright bribes to members of the Chilean congress, in an effort to block the ratification in Sept.-Oct. 1970 of Allende's election to the presidency. (The money was wasted, Allende was confirmed.)

—Pouring \$1.5 million into the coffers of rightist candidates in the crucial March 1973 Congressional elections. (Despite this the Allende forces broadened their electoral support.)

—Budgeting \$1 million in Aug. 1973, just weeks before the coup, for "further political destabilization."

Colby also admitted that the CIA financed right-wing demonstrations against the Popular Unity government, bought a radio station for the right wing, and subsidized a number of right-wing newspapers. Though he named no names, it is highly probable that a newspaper that got particularly big subsidies is the Santiago daily "El Mercurio."

COLBY'S 'MODESTY'

Extensive though it is, Colby's list of CIA operations in Chile is actually much too modest. The interventions he admits to are only the tip of an iceberg. More deeply involved was not only the CIA itself, but also other U.S. intelligence agencies, government departments and branches of the military and of the corporate establishment, as well as high officials of the AFL-CIO, often acting in coordination. The U.S. government was at the center of a vast and more or less sophisticated orchestration of interventions and "disturbances" in Chile aimed at bringing the Allende government down.

Among other instances which should be mentioned are the U.S. credit and spare parts blockade, the buildup of black markets and hoarding, the already publicized role played by ITT, and the role of the Rockefeller-controlled Council of the Americas which based its operations and channeled its funds through Brazil.

If, as Colby claimed, the CIA did not contribute money to each and every right-wing cause in Chile, it is because U.S. corporations and conduits, together with Chile's own financial elite, were pumping in their own outlandish sums of money at the same time. One of the key figures in this other network is Agustin Edwards, Chile's biggest native capitalist, who is a crony of two Nixon henchmen—Bebe Rebozo and PepsiCo chairman Donald Kendall. Edwards was made vice-president of Pepsi-Chile just before Allende took office and organized a worldwide money pipeline to the Chilean right from his estate in Florida.

There is also much evidence that the CIA, contrary to Colby's denial, was up to its ears in paramilitary and terrorist activities in Chile. It had a hand in funding, training and arming the fascist gang Patria y Libertad and carried on extensive gun-running out of military bases in Texas. Southern Air Transport, the CIA's Latin American airline that figured in the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba, was also observed flying in a large cargo load to Santiago just weeks before the coup.

The CIA was likewise behind the organizations which led the big lockouts and the reactionary shopkeepers and truck owners strikes of Oct. 1972 and July 1973, not to mention a myriad of minor espionage and terrorist activities. Without the backing of the CIA and of the U.S. government and corporations, the Chilean reactionaries most probably would not have been strong enough to overthrow the Allende government.

00770